

# **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Housing Specialist Training Institute**

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# **Role, Duties and Responsibilities of the Housing Specialist**

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# History of Housing Specialist Position

- Lessons learned from the AB 2034 and FSP Programs
  - Housing Services are an essential treatment component
  - Safe affordable housing is key to recovery
- Passage of the Mental Health Services Act
  - Transforming Mental Health System
  - Support consumers in achieving recovery goals
  - Mantra of Whatever it takes
  - A primary goal of MHSA is to help consumers find a safe and affordable place to live.
- Development of the Community Services and Supports Plan
  - Countywide Housing Specialists
  - Housing Specialist staff position on FSP Teams

# ROLE OF THE HOUSING SPECIALIST

Varies Depending on Agency/Program

- Countywide Housing Specialists
  - Receives Referrals from DMH Clinics in the Service Area
- Housing Coordinators for Agency
  - Receives Referrals from Agency Case Managers
- Treatment Team Member Specializing in Housing
  - Full Service Partnerships

# ROLE OF THE HOUSING SPECIALIST

## General Categories of Duties:

- 1) Assists consumers with locating and obtaining housing
- 2) Assists consumers with maintaining housing
- 3) Participates as mental health team member
- 4) Develops housing resources in the community

# Assists Consumers with Locating and Obtaining Housing

- Conducts Housing Assessment
  - Housing History
  - Financial Situation
  - Transportation
  - Criminal Convictions
- Independent Living Supports/Assistance Needed

# **Assists Consumers with Locating and Obtaining Housing cont.**

- Works with Consumer to Develop Housing Plan
  - Short Term vs. Long Term Goals
    - Identifies Funding Sources and Resources
  - Identification of Barriers
    - Assists in resolving legal history barriers (e.g. warrants, expungement)
    - Gathers required documents such as identification, social security card, bank statements
  - Accompanies/transport the consumer to all necessary related appointments as requested

## **Assists Consumers with Locating and Obtaining Housing cont.**

- Educates consumers about available housing resources and assistance in the community
- Determines and certifies eligibility for federal, state and locally funded housing programs by verifying income, assets and other financial data
- Assists with compiling and assessing eligibility information in compliance with housing regulations



## **Assists Consumers with Locating and Obtaining Housing cont.**

- Provides referrals to appropriate housing resources
- Assists in the housing search process
- Assists with completion of applications for rental subsidies such as Section 8 and Shelter Plus Care, Housing Assistance Program

## **Assists Consumers with Locating and Obtaining Housing cont.**

- Assists with preparing for interviews with Housing Authority, managers and property owners (e.g. mock interviews)
- Educates individuals about tenant rights and responsibilities
- Advocates and negotiates for clients with poor credit and poor housing histories (i.e. evictions or lack of housing tenancy)
- Assists with move in

# Assists Consumers with Maintaining Housing

- Ensures consumer is connected to on-going mental health supports
- Advocates for clients with landlords when tenant's rights have been violated.
- Averts possible evictions by maintaining professional relationships with property owners and managers and promptly addressing their concerns
- Liaison between landlord and consumer and mental health team

# Participates as Mental Health Team Member

- Provides information, training and technical assistance to team members regarding the housing resources in the community
- Accepts housing assistance referrals from team
- Keeps team informed of consumer progress in meeting housing goals
- Informs team of any observed or landlord/manager reported difficulties consumer is experiencing in the housing including the need for additional supports, crisis intervention or medication evaluation

# Develops Resources in the Community

- Outreach to property owners and managers to:
  - Develop potential housing resources
  - Provide education about mental health to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness
  - Increase the availability of housing opportunities in the fair market
- Researches housing resources and develops community specific housing resource directory
- Liaison to Countywide Housing, Employment and Education Resource Development (CHEERD)
- Represents agency/program at Service Area and County-wide housing related meetings

# Housing Specialist Presenters

- Curley Holden, Exodus Recovery
- Faye Williams, Enki Health and Research Systems, Inc.
- Carol Phillips, Service Area 4